THE RAGTIMER

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1975

PUBLISHED BY
THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

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PRESERVATION OF
CLASSICAL RAGTIME

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REPRINT MUSIC PACKAGE

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The above 15 titles by 15 different composers
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FOUNDED 1962
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THE RAGTIME SOCIETY
INCORPORATED

is a non - profit corporation having the following objects:

To preserve classical ragtime music and to pursue such other activities as shall serve to maintain and develop interest in classical ragtime music and music related thereto.

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 1976 IN THE RAGTIME SOCIETY INC. NOW!

USE THE ATTACHED RENEWAL FORM

THE NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1975 ISSUE OF THE RAGTIMER WILL BE THE LAST ONE MAILED TO 1975 MEMBERS

RAGTIME...
UNDER YOUR HAT

Our first words are used to say "THANK YOU" for your cooperative response in sending in renewals for 1975 before the end of 1974. It worked so well that we were able to send out membership cards and a revised printing of our catalogue to 1975 members, along with the first issue of THE RAGTIMER for the year. It made our job a lot easier.

The start of another ragtime year is only weeks away. We ask for your cooperation again. PLEASE RENEW YOUR SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FOR 1976 NOW AND/OR PRIOR TO THE END OF 1975 - DON'T FORGET THE COST OF MEMBERSHIP IS NOW $8.00.

We have stated our immediate needs. If you do your part promptly we can all relax and get back to the happier business of carrying on the ragtime life. Here in Toronto it is "BASH" time and our final issue for the year is expected to report on another great reunion of ragtimers.

Toronto has been favoured with a number of new hotel openings during the past couple of years. The talents of our own leading entertainer, JOHN ARPIN, has been eagerly sought in that connection. The Hyatt Regency opened early in 1974 where John took over the entertainment for the Odyssey Lounge at the sky level. Then John moved to the opening of the Prince Hotel later in the year where he provided a band for the main dining room while offering his solo piano fans some action in the "Brandy Tree" room in the early hours of each evening. On October 20th (Monday) John will be part of the opening ceremonies at another new downtown hotel opening. This time it will be at the CHELSEA INN

(continued on page 4)

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(named after the Royal Borough) and situated at 33 Gerrard St. West. As always, we speak of our fellow ragtimer with pride about his accomplishments. (See SOMETHING DOING for particulars).

Scott Joplin and John Stark could never believe that their short teaching course published in 1908 entitled "The School of Ragtime - Six Exercises for Piano" would become the subject for a recording. Nevertheless, the new RCA 5-record album of Dick Hyman playing Scott Joplin includes those exercises. But the stroke of genius to be found in their presentation, is the added voicing of instructions by none other than our own Society Honourary Life Member - the inimitable EUBIE BLAKE. The album will become another collecting treasure for Eubie Blake fans.

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by
TEX
WYNDHAM

Herwin 402 'Piano Ragtime Of The Teens, Twenties & Thirties'

Selections and Artists: Red Onion Rag - Roy Spangler; Wild Cherries Rag - Frank Banta; Scouting Around - James P. Johnson; Chili Pepper, Tomato Sauce - Fred Longshaw; Sweetheart O'Mine, King Porter Stomp, Kansas City Stomp - Jelly Roll Morton; Dusting The Keys - Al Siegel; Wild Flower Rag - Clarence Williams; Texas Shout - Cow Cow Davenport; Arnold Wiley Rag, Windy City - Arnold Wiley; West Dallas Drag #1 - Rob Cooper; Little Rock Getaway - Joe Sullivan; Finger Buster - Willie 'The Lion' Smith.

Folkways RF 23 'Ragtime Piano Originals'

Selections and Artists: Blaze Away, Tantalizing Tingles - Mike Bernard; A Classical Spasm - Harry Thomas; It's A Peach - Malvin M. Franklin; Nigger's Hop - Joseph Batten; Modulation - Clarence Jones; Unknown Rag; Butter Scotch - Willy White; Upright And Grand - Frank Banta (with orchestral accompaniment); The Boston Trot - Sid Reinherz; Peanut Cackle - Frank Herbin; Whippin' The Keys - Sam Goold; That Futuristic Rag - Rube Bloom; Crooked Notes - Jean Paques; Fire Crackers - Donald Thorne; Piano Puzzle - Arthur Schutt.

Genesis GS 1044 'Piano Rags by James Scott', played by John Jensen

Selections: Sunburst Rag, Quality, Pegasus, Grace And Beauty, Honeymoon Rag, Prosperity Rag, Victory Rag, Frog Legs Rag, Modesty Rag, Ragtime Oriole, Evergreen Rag, Paramount Rag, Broadway Rag, Troubador Rag, Climax Rag, Calliope Rag, Hilarity Rag, Peace And Plenty Rag.

Genesis GS 1045 'Piano Rags By Joseph Lamb', played by John Jensen

Selections: Sensation, Excelsior Rag, Ethiopia Rag, American Beauty Rag, Reindeer, The Ragtime Nightingale, Top Liner Rag, Patricia Rag, Alabama Rag, Bird-Brain Rag, Blue Grass Rag, Cottontail Rag, The Old Home Rag, Thoroughbred Rag, Toad Stool Rag.

Pickwick SPC-3376 'Dick Wellstood Plays Ragtime Music Of Scott Joplin'

Selections: The Entertainer, The Chrysanthemum, Gladiolus Rag, The Easy Winners, Scott Joplin's New Rag, Sunflower Slow Drag, Pine Apple Rag, The Ragtime Dance, Maple Leaf Rag, Solace, The Fig Leaf, The Cascades.

The first two Lps listed above, compiled and with liner notes by ragtime pianist and discographer David A. Jasen, consist of reissues of material recorded during the ragtime years. Some of the tracks have languished in obscurity virtually since their original release, but undeservedly so as the pianists here are, without exception, top-quality artists.

Herwin 402 offers a broad spectrum of rag styles, including selections heavily laced with boogie ("Texas Shout"), blues ("Scouting Around" and "West Dallas Drag #1"), and jazz ("Little Rock Getaway"). Thus, it may be the more preferable of the two for someone who isn't that deeply into ragtime as yet and wants an enjoyable sampler as a take-off point. Also, dyed-in-the-wool ragtimers are likely to have a number of the sides, certainly the three Mortons and probably Smith and Williams as well.

Each performer on Folkways RF 23 solos on his own composition. They are excellent works for the most part and brilliantly played, principally fast, striding, full-bodied ragtime, but spiced with Thorne's lighter, ethereal "Fire Crackers" or the humorous bagpipe effect in White's "Butter Scotch".

Perhaps the best thing about these two excellent albums is their high proportion of "novelty ragtime", a flashy style that derived substantial impetus from the phenomenal success of Confrey's "Kitten On The Keys" but which has received little attention in the current ragtime revival (probably because novelty rags are extremely difficult to play). The technique of these novelty ragtimers is nothing short of stupefying, two-handed figures and eccentric rhythms flying all over the keyboard with ease and confidence at top speed; frankly, Al Siegel, Sam Goold, Clarence Jones, Arnold Wiley and several others among these now-forgotten artists have to be heard to be believed.

In summary, both albums are unqualifiedly recommended. Dave Jasen has compiled two other piano reissue Lps for Folkways, by the way, which his fans may find of interest though neither is a ragtime record: Folkways FJ 2851 features Joe Sullivan in solo and with jazz combos, all previously unreleased numbers (Dave says) and generally catching Sullivan playing boiling-hot jazz. Folkways FJ 2852 covers six different great names of jazz piano in, we are told, mostly unissued solos; I find the few really good selections (Teddy Wilson, Willie "The Lion" Smith) are rather scratchy while the others (Art Tatum and Mary Lou Williams mostly), though well enough reproduced and played, lack inspiration.

Speaking of novelty ragtime, Capitol ST-11303 reissues ten tracks (taken from now-deleted Lps, I believe) by the pianist who kept novelty ragtime more or less before the public throughout the late forties and early fifties, Joe "Fingers" Carr (real name Lou Busch). The bass-and-drums accompaniment is a bit too busy (and corny) for my taste, and the total playing time of 22 minutes 40 seconds is rather skimpy, but Busch has breathtaking technique and is in his element on the novelty material designed to showcase it -- Claypoole's "Ragging The Scale", Roberts' "Entertainer's Rag" and Busch's own "Waltz In Ragtime", arguably the best 3/4 time ragtime composition of them all.

Moving to contemporary recordings, we have at hand one Lp each of rags by Scott Joplin, James Scott and Joseph Lamb. Probably worked up under some pressure to produce Lps while ragtime is commercially hot, Jensen's and Wellstood's efforts do not get very far into the music, the rags mostly being played at nearly the same (generally brisk) tempo, with little added in the way of dynamics or interpretation.

This approach works best with Scott, whose works are more pianistic and raggedy compared to the often lyrical and romantic compositions of the other two. The Scott Lp, in fact, fills a real void in the market, containing over half his total piano solos, cleanly and completely played (including all repeats, providing over an hour of music!); up to now, there hasn't been that much Scott around, probably because his material is, overall, tougher to play than Joplin's or Lamb's. You'll want Jensen's Lamb Lp too, despite the rather superficial readings on some tunes ("Sensation" at breakneck speed is just a mess), because it does offer what I think are the only recordings to date of some of Lamb's posthumously published titles.

Wellstood's Lp is disappointing in view of his considerable keyboard skill. Reflecting Wellstood's jazz background, his left hand is crisp and sure, pushing the tunes along with a properly jaunty pulse that never gets too hot. You'll also hear, however, some obvious clinkers in the right hand (unprecedented for the usually crystal-clear Wellstood) and strange omissions or alterations in the melodies that have no discernable musical purpose and probably result from insufficient familiarity with the scores. There's enough Joplin around now so that you don't need to rush right out for this one.

I can't close today's column without mentioning one of the most enjoyable piano Lps I've heard recently, Klavier KS-122, containing ten performances from hand-played piano rolls cut by George Gershwin. Gershwin could play piano like you wouldn't believe, and his style, at lease on pop tunes (no rags on the Lp), is heavily flavored with stride rhythm and novelty rag effects. The presence, on a Duo-Art reproducing piano, is amazing, with most tracks sounding like live recordings. Piano roll fans, and ragtimers with a broad range of ragtime interests, should look for this one.

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CHRISTMAS SHOPPING LIST

Don't overlook the suitability of a ragtime recording for a friend, as a pleasant introduction to our favourite music.

PADDLEWHEELERS ARE MAKING A BIG COMEBACK

(The following by George Bryant, is taken from The Toronto Star of Saturday, May 3, 1975)

Mark Twain may be long gone but his spirit goes chugging along. As witness the fact that in Louisville, Ky., this week they christened a new paddlewheel steamer for passenger service, the first since 1926.

And the company that ordered it is, of all things, an airline.

You see, Overseas National Airways is already in the paddlewheel business. It owns the Delta Queen Steamboat Co., which operates a venerable sternwheeler of the same name up and down the Mississippi River System. And business is booming. People have to ride airplanes in the modern world, but they like to ride steamboats. One is a matter of necessity, the other a matter of love.

Certainly Twain would understand that. The new ship, the Mississippi Queen, may be a lot bigger (344 feet) and a lot slicker (with a swimming pool, elevators, air conditioning and a movie theatre) than the craft he knew. But she'll be a sister under her sleek steel skin.

She'll ply the same ports - New Orleans, St. Louis, Natchez, Vicksburg, Hannibal and the rest - and if he could see her rounding a bend on a starry night with her paddlewheel chunking and her lights blazing and her calliope calling he'd know her for one of his own whatever her cost or modern conveniences.

How can one predict that when the ship doesn't go on her maiden voyage until March 2, 1976? Simple. Because of the attention to detail that's gone into creating this modern version of the traditional steamboat. And from trips on her older sister, the Delta Queen.

The Delta Queen has a wooden superstructure and lacks the pool and other amenities of the new ship but she'd still appear newfangled in Twain's eyes. She was built in this century, far from the Mississippi, and has spent much of her life on other waters. So she doesn't rate as a classical Mississippi paddlewheeler. But that doesn't matter a damn when you travel on her. The river is real and so is the atmosphere and the trip is a joy.

Which explains, in part, why a jet-age airline is investing $17 million in turning the clock back a century.

The Delta Queen, which will continue to operate along with the Mississippi Queen until at least 1978, travels the Mississippi, Ohio, Illinois, Arkansas and Cumberland rivers on cruises varying in length from two nights to nineteen.

All have things to recommend them, from festivals to fall foliage, but obviously one of the best takes you sliding down the Mississippi itself to New Orleans, which is worth getting to any way you can. But best of all by paddlewheeler.

Information on either ship can be obtained from the Delta Queen Steamboat Co., 322 E. Fourth St., Cincinnati, Ohio 45202.

Meanwhile, down in Kingston, at the east end of Lake Ontario, they're invoking some of the same magic with a new Thousand Island cruise ship, the Island Queen.

This Queen isn't on quite the same scale as the Mississippi Queen and her paddlewheel isn't really for propulsion. But she has the open deck and gingerbread and fluted smokestacks of the traditional paddlewheelers - and a dance floor for her starlight cruises.

Her size, 100 feet with a 28-foot beam, and three decks mean that passengers can move around more than on some scenic cruisers. And the owners hope to whomp up some paddlewheel atmosphere, though the St. Lawrence isn't exactly Ole Man River.

For information write Kingston and the Islands Boat Lines Co. Ltd., Suite 201-A, Kingston Shopping Centre, Kingston.

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TOES START TAPPING AS RAGTIME RETURNS

The January 8, 1975 issue of The Mississauga News carried Bob Bergen's article covering his interview with Ragtime Society member Austin Kitchen. Austin has been a regular at Society "Bashes" for many years and the story about him is reprinted below.

"Ragtime music inevitably had to come back," according to Mississauga musician, Austin Kitchen.

He thought the music was just so good he couldn't help but fool around with a tune that kept popping into his head.

He just couldn't shake that ragtime tune so, rather than forget it, he wrote it down.

That tune has just been published by Eldorado Music Publications, Mr. Kitchen's own venture, under the name of "The Mississauga Rag".

Now his next step is to try and get the bouncy piece recorded then sit back and wait for world acclaim to come to him.

The song has already been recognized by the writers of the "Ragtimer" as having great potential. The Ragtimer is the official publication of the Ragtime Society Incorporated.

Once a year ragtime addicts gather together at the Cara Inn to "have a bash" as Mr. Kitchen describes it.

"Not this year but last year I was asked to play at one of the society bashes and I didn't have anything prepared," he says.

"So I started playing this tune.

"Jack Cuff one of the writers for the Ragtimer suggested I call it the Mississauga Rag, which I did," he said.

"Ragtime has come a long way with books written on style and form," Mr. Kitchen explained.

"It's a basic style of music which has been dormant, but it was inevitable that it had to come back."

AUSTIN KITCHEN

The popularity of the music in the movie The Sting will attest to the accuracy of Mr. Kitchen's observations.

There is a wide variety of material for the ragtime buffs to play with. Mr. Kitchen is so enthusiastic about the whole ragtime music scene he carries about old clippings he has of ragtime musicians.

One of his most prized possessions is a copy of the Charleston Rag written in 1899 by Eubie Blake, one of the last of the great ragtime piano players.

The reason Mr. Kitchen so values that piece is because the work was sent to

him personally by Blake and is a collector's item because it was never published.

Not that Mr. Kitchen is by any stretch of the imagination an oldtimer but he's certainly been around in music circles.

He's played with King Ganam, Tommy Hunter and Gordie Tapp. He played every Saturday in the "dungeon" at Casa Loma for four and a half years.

He started 'jobbing' with small orchestras and that's when he got to really know the Toronto and area music world.

"You'd get to know people and they'd phone you up and ask what you were doing, say on Thursday night. If I was doing nothing, I'd book it. Half the time you didn't know who you were going to play with and you'd get paid at the end of the night," he said.

Mr. Kitchen has made recordings with other musicians such as King Ganam but he's never recorded as a soloist.

"I had to get out of the routine at Casa Loma because, believe it or not, you never had time to practice."

When he was working professionally he never had the time to fool around on the piano improvising and he never had the time to come up with tunes like the Mississauga Rag.

Now he works as a piano technician and he has had the time to come up with nearly 50 or 60 melodies and tunes.

Other songs he's published include "Canada, the land I love," "It's Christmas time," and "Once I was an Irish Boy."

As well as writing ragtime music, he writes classical and semi-classical music.

"I used to write reels and jigs on the fiddle, too," he confessed.

"I worked with George Wade, one of the oldtimers in square dance music, as well as Jim McGill and his Northern Ramblers.

"Square dancing, now there's a real lost art," he said.

At the last square dancing festival held at Geneva Park Mr. Kitchen's anger became just too much to contain and he charged to the front telling all present they were corrupting the whole idea of square dancing.

"They were doing American dances to different music and the wrong steps.

I was so mad I just went up and told them they'd corrupted it. I told them if they were going to do something different than square dancing, they should call it something different."

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SCOTT JOPLIN REDISCOVERED - PART 10

The music of Scott Joplin continues to grow in popularity as it comes to the ears of an ever-widening audience of listeners. The ragtime clan welcomes the entry of "TREEMONISHA" to the Broadway Theatre Scene as one of the 1975 openings. Member Ron Davis drew our attention to a question asked by writer and lyrist Jack Viertel in his article published in New Times magazine November 29, 1974: "Is Joplin's life about to become as famous as his rags?" Certainly we all know that while the music of Joplin was adapted for "The Sting", the whole range of Joplin's music is ready-made for a movie on Scott's life. Mr. Viertel's article "Scott Joplin: his rags, whose riches?" was directed at controversial questions of financial gain from Joplin's efforts of long ago, but the following was taken from that article as further insight on the life of Scott Joplin:

"Is Joplin's life about to become as famous as his rags? Jennings Lang, senior vice-president of M. C. A., whose Universal Studios released The Sting, doesn't rule out the possibility. "There are about nineteen treatments for pictures about Scott Joplin floating around," he says. "I don't know if there's a story there or not."

In truth, Joplin's life does not have the myth-making pop culture thrills of dope or violence that kept the fictionalized Billie Holiday hurtling through the seamy sensationalism of the film Lady Sings the Blues. Joplin's is a life dominated by a quest for legitimacy. From the time he published his first rag in 1899 until his death not quite 19 years later, his activities were devoted to the task of earning acceptance from the "serious" music establishment for himself and his bastard child - ragtime. Unfortunately, he had neither the face nor the background to succeed.

Scott Joplin was born in Texarkana, Texas, in 1868 and remained there for 14 years. By the age of 7 his musical talent was so prodigious that his father, a former slave, bought him a piano, and he was given lessons, primarily classical, by a local German piano teacher. He left home following an impasse with his father, who insisted he learn a trade, and became an itinerant musician, drifting up and down the Mississippi, following any job he could find, finally centering his activities around St. Louis. It was a world of saloons and bordellos, night gambling and easy money, but somewhere along the line Scott Joplin seemed to have gotten it out of his system. His classical training may have helped him absorb the flowing, poly-rhythmic melodies known as "jig piano" that he and hundreds of others were creating nightly, and may have driven him to want to write them down on music paper. Most of the pianists devoted themselves to the available high life, but Joplin settled down in the town of Sedalia, Missouri, and enrolled in a Negro college, taking advanced courses in harmony and composition. In 1895 he published a couple of mediocre songs, and in 1899 his first rag appeared.

In that same year, Joplin met the man who would change his life, and without whom there might be no ragtime boom today. John Stark, former homesteader, ice cream manufacturer and musical instrument peddler, was a white man and 58 years old when he walked into a Sedalia saloon in 1899. While enjoying a beer, he heard Scott Joplin play a rag on the piano and invited him to Stark & Son music company, where he bought the piece for $50 plus a royalty. It was called "The Maple Leaf Rag," and soon Joplin and Stark were wealthy men. "The Maple Leaf" sold in the neighborhood of 75,000 copies in six months. Scott Joplin, 31 years of age, moved out of the red light district to stay, hopeful that ragtime was on its way to legitimate acceptance as a classical American form. This was, unfortunately, the last sensational success that ever befell him.

He moved to St. Louis, where a poor marriage dissolved after the death of an infant daughter. The success of his rags kept him from financial difficulty, but their very popularity seemed to drive him to more and more ambitious projects. A 20-page ballet with lyrics and dance instructions, called The Ragtime Dance, was a 1902 failure, and an entire opera, A Guest of Honor, was never professionally produced, although there were evidently private performances and backers' auditions. The opera is now lost, but its rumored plot, concerning a reception at the governor's mansion where the guest of honor is none other than Scott Joplin himself, bespeaks the composer's yearning for acceptance into the white establishment and for acknowledgment of his not insubstantial accomplishments.

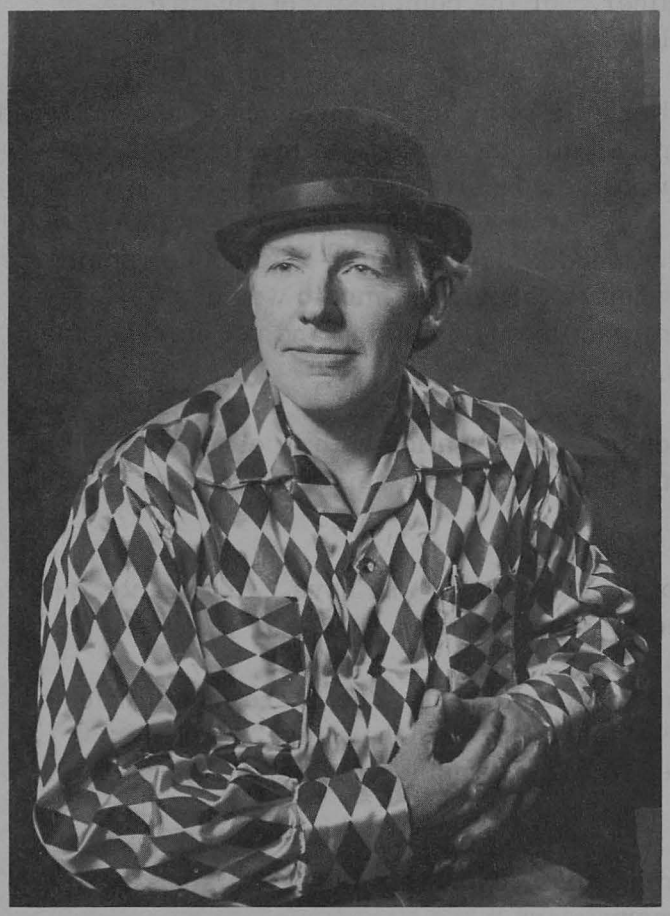
In 1907 Joplin moved to New York. He wrote only 11 rags in the last nine years of his life, and most of his labor was devoted to a new opera, Treemonisha. He remarried, and his wife took on boarders while he worked to complete the opera, which was rejected by all of the music publishers to whom it was submitted. In 1911 Joplin published it at his own expense, hoping to interest producers in mounting it.

Two years later, still without backers, Joplin joined the general Negro migration uptown to Harlem. In a house on 131st Street, he worked feverishly on the opera's orchestration, but his mental state was beginning to deteriorate. He experienced periods of almost monomaniacal concentration on his work. His failure to induce production of the opera by publishing it led him to mount a trial performance of it in 1915, banking all his hope and most of his money on it. Its failure was a crushing blow. Joplin fell into a depression from which he only occasionally emerged. His coordination began to deteriorate, as can be heard to a shocking extent on a piano roll of "The Maple Leaf Rag" that he made in June of 1916. In the fall of that year, his wife was forced to have him committed to the Manhattan State Hospital on Wards Island, where he died on April 1, 1917. The certificate states his cause of death as "Dementia Paralytica - cerebral. Contributing Cause: Syphilis." A man who had worked all his life to escape the stigma of the red light district finally had it stamped on him forever. As a memorial, John Stark issued Reflection Rag, evidently culled from unpublished themes in the Stark & Co. files.

Joplin's music never really died. But although "The Maple Leaf" became a standard and has never been out of sheet music print, its composer was a more or less forgotten man."

(The following is reprinted from an article by Patty Mack which appeared in The Times-Union of Rochester N. Y. on Monday September 30, 1974. The article captures the enthusiasm, one of our long-time members, GALE FOEHNER, has consistently displayed for ragtime over many years.)

RAGTIME PIANO TUNER



GALE FOEHNER

Ragtime's days are numbered. We are sorry to think that anyone should imagine that ragtime was of the least importance. It was a popular wave in the wrong direction. - Metronome Magazine, May, 1901.

Long before most people had heard of Marvin Hamlisch, Scott Joplin, or a bouncing song called "The Entertainer", a local piano tuner named Gale Foehner began "preaching the message of ragtime."

Yes, ragtime. The stuff that gets feet tapping and heads nodding to tunes called the "Frog Legs Rag," the "Honeymoon Rag," the "American Beauty Rag," and the "Hilarity Rag."

It's smile music, this happy-go-lucky piano ragtime sound. But when Foehner first got on to his musical evangelism kick, it was considered by most to be bar music - fit for the corner tavern but certainly not for the concert hall.

That was discouraging for someone trying to make it as a performing ragtime piano player. So Foehner went into the piano tuning business. And he continued to play wherever people would listen to him be it bars or pizza parlors or amusement parks or the homes of his piano tuning customers.

Well, ragtime has come a long way, thanks to "The Sting" which re-introduced it to movie going audiences.

And so has Gale Foehner. Recently he gave his biggest concert - at the Nazareth Arts Center that drew an S. R. O. crowd.

And he's coming out with his first L. P. - "Scott Joplin Lives" - a 33 r. p. m.

"There must be money in it, or there wouldn't be any records," Foehner says with a big old ragtime piano music smile on his face. "There's going to be a big wave of it. I can see it. It's nostalgia. People haven't had this music for years. We've had young people's music. Good. Hooray. They've had their day. Now let's bring some of that (ragtime) and these (ragtime tunes) back."

Gale Foehner ("Gaslite" Gale, to his friends), is a lot like the music he plays - smiling, bubbling, energetic, and always talking - about the genius of Joplin, or the beauty of "The Entertainer," or the complexity of ragtime or the misconceptions about the music he plays.

He works out of "The Ragskeller," in room in his basement that's cluttered with ragtime records, ragtime newspaper clippings, ragtime music books, ragtime tapes, and posters advertising ragtime concerts.

And he practices on an old Rhythmodik player piano - the one he rebuilt after destroying it a few years back when he thought his music was destroying his family life. ("It's so frustrating to want to do something and not do it because it doesn't make any money," he says.)

That piano contributes as much to a conversation with Foehner as he does. Ask him a question and he'll turn to the keyboard like a ragtime preacher turning to his Bible.

"Now this became the basis of boogie woogie," he says, while gently pounding out "Original Rags," written by Scott Joplin in 1899.

"Then Joplin made it big with 'The Maple Leaf', one of the most difficult jazz compositions ever written. 'The Maple Leaf' was the thing." Foehner's fingers, stained from the varnish used to refinish pianos, scamper across the dusty keys.

"Hear the suspense. It's coming folks. Now this is it. This has been the basis for countless melodies for so many years."

"Here's the 'Muskrat Rag.' It was written about the time of Joplin's death."

"This is an original. 'Smoky Mokes' by A. Holzmann. It was a terrific tune. It was a secondary rag.

"Here's one by Luckeyeth Roberts."

"And just listen to the ninths in this one. They're used today in modern jazz. The syncopation of it gives you the suspense. Now comes the part they all use. Do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do - haruumph..."

The notes spill out of the piano, bringing a grin to Foehner's face and a bounce to his body. It's the message of a ragtime fanatic trying to bring yet another listener over to his side of the ragtime debate.

"This is our music. This is our origin. Not Beethoven. Not Germany, though I love that music. This is a whole conglomeration of people's music. I almost go into tears. Why doesn't everyone know. That's what I don't understand. It's ragged time, sure. But it's a ragged life."

So how did a piano tuner from Rochester, N. Y., become a ragtime piano-playing man?

It wasn't easy, Foehner says.

Most ragtime pieces were out of print until 1962 when The Ragtime Society of Toronto was formed for the preservation of ragtime music. (Its members "felt America was leaving a great music, a great culture behind just because it didn't make money.")

What Foehner did was listen over and over and over again to ragtime recordings until he could play them by ear without using music.

He started with Wally Rose's "Original Rags," the recording that made him a ragtime fanatic in the early '30s.

And then he started scouring antique shops, basements, and attics for ragtime music that had been discarded for the big name band sounds of the '30s and '40s.

Foehner learned to play ragtime, alright. He played, usually for free, in bars, he played in the army, he played in New York, he played in the old Delaware Hotel.

Foehner was playing, but people weren't listening, at least not closely enough to pay the bills.

So he became what is probably the only piano tuner in town who uses Scott Joplin tunes to check out his instruments. ("I figured if it stood up under ragtime, it was tuned pretty well.")

Twenty-two years ago and 250,000 tuned pianos later, Foehner is still preaching the gospel of ragtime.

Gaslite Gale is optimistic about the future of ragtime music.

"The Sting," he says "has been the crusading thing for ragtime. Marvin (Hamlisch's) recordings are helping all of us. People won't love it until they hear it."

But even if ragtime doesn't catch on, Foehner's not about to change his style.

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LETTERS

Letters are welcome from members. Excerpts believed to be of general interest are passed along in this section of THE RAGTIMER.

(Ed. Comment:
Member appeals for help in his search for neglected information about JOE LAMB. If you can help Joe Scotti, write him at his address given below.)

Thanks to the invaluable guideance of Trebor Tichenor and the cordial cooperation of your own John Fisher, I am now in the final stages of research on a doctoral dissertation, "Joe Lamb: A Study of Ragtime's Paradox." The dissertation topic was enthusiastically approved by the Thesis Committee of my school, the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati. This shows that ragtime is making impressive progress as an area of scholarly investigation, something that goes far beyond performances of the Joplin rags and belated stagings of Treemonisha.

It is the fond hope of many people connected with this dissertation that this study will be another link in the chain that connects the "Joplin" revival with a more thorough ragtime revival. My indebtedness to Trebor, John, Dave Jason, Mike Montgomery, and many others - including Dr. Paul Palombo, my research advisor at the University - is enormous. Most of all, it is Trebor and John who made the whole thing possible by their unselfish cooperation in the early stages of the research.

At this point in the investigation I need to hear from ragtimers who have letters, tapes, or other memorabilia of Joe Lamb. His widow, Amelia, has been most helpful with her memories of her husband but, being the devoted family man that he was, he seems to have limited most of his musical memoires to correspondence with ragtime enthusiasts after his rediscovery by Blesh and Janis.

All material will be duly acknowledged in the dissertation and any other publications which may come out of it.

Joe Scotti
2327 Albion Pl., St. Louis, Mo., USA 63104

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In the November-December 1974 issue of The Ragtimer on page 21 you mentioned my ragtime experience in Italy.

This summer I had a similar experience on the other side of the world, The Orient. While dining in the Grill of the Hong Kong Hilton Hotel we were entertained by the hotel "Pianiste", Lauro Gabanella. His medley of American songs inevitably included THE ENTERTAINER. I requested more music from THE STING. That was the only one he knew. At his request, I played PINEAPPLE RAG. He liked it so much that I gave him a copy. When I told him of my experience in Rome, he also wanted to hear RUSSIAN RAG. I played it and sent him a copy. The fascination of ragtime is world wide.

Leonard J. Fliedner
Flushing, N. Y., USA

(Ed. Comment: It is always welcome news to hear about ragtimers doing their own thing in the promotion of ragtime. A tip of our ragtime hat goes to Leonard.)

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(Ed. Comment: The Society expresses its thanks to Jim Messina for his contribution of recorded ragtime to its "archive" material. In his letter Jim goes on to say:)

Garage Sales - After seeing what I have seen this past Sunday at an open-air "flea market" of people selling their past dreams, I have one very strong recommendation to make to every fan and student of classic ragtime! I urge everyone who likes ragtime; similar music of that era; and other period items from 1900 to 1925 to Run - don't walk - to each and every single "Garage Sale", flea market, flea circus, bazaar, rummage sale and/or whatever! There's no telling what you will find - even the "Lost Dutchman Gold Mine". There are bargains galore to be found - try not to walk away guilty - it won't be easy.
..... (Members who are avid collectors know full well what Jim's itch is all about.)

Jim Messina
50 Miami Heights, Fla., USA

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Bernard Huber
32, rue Moillebeau, 1209, Geneva 28, Switzerland
collects original cover sheet music. Wants to know if other members living in Canada or the United States have any for sale. Alternately can anyone direct Bernard to a source where he can buy? His problem is that old leftover ragtime music does not turn up in Europe. Contact Bernard directly if you can help.

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CAPSULE

INFORMATION

RELEASES ---------- FOR HAPPY HUNTING

NOTE: We often receive information from members and other sources which can be passed along in brief form as items of possible general interest. CAPSULE INFORMATION RELEASES do not refer to items or material which can be obtained from the SOCIETY. Further, we do not guarantee the accuracy of the information given. Under the conditions stated, we are able to publicize a broader coverage of promising information coming to our attention.

Poster Reproduction - BLIND BOONE CONCERT CO. 11 x 14 suitable for framing. Available from Eric W. Sager, Southern Music Co., 725 Zeiss, St. Louis, Mo., 63125, U.S.A. (The poster is an "in advance notice" and pictures Blind Boone, his manager, and a singer.)

Magazine - YESTERYEAR published by Yesteryear Museum, Box 1890, Morristown, N.J. 07960, U.S.A. For membership and particulars about this new venture, write directly to the Yesteryear Museum.

Journal - THE RECORD COLLECTOR'S JOURNAL published monthly. Write to P.O. Box 1200, Covina, California 91722, U.S.A. Mark Elliott is the publisher. Covers 78's, 45's and 33's in all music categories. Includes articles on phonographs, piano rolls, cylinders and jukeboxes.

LP Records Banjo Music - EDDIE DAVIS PLAYS RAGTIME P7401 (U.S. price $5.98) The classic ragtime of Scott Joplin played by two banjos - 2nd banjo - Buck Kelly.

- EDDIE DAVIS JUST FOR FUN P7402 (U.S. price $5.98) The jazzed ragtime of Jelly Roll Morton - record includes novelty tunes played by a ten piece orchestra.

Both records and music for banjo duets available from PA DA Publishing and Recording, 27 Washington Square North 4D, New York, N.Y. 10011, U.S.A.

Piano Rolls - Hollywood Player Piano Roll Co. 8416 Beckford Ave., Northridge, California, 91324, U.S.A. - Steve Neilson sent us an enlarged listing of rag rolls (30 Joplin, 15 Scott, 7 Lamb, and 20 of other composers - all are recut from original rolls.) (U.S. price $3.95 each plus postage).

LP Record - MANY FACES OF RAGTIME with pianist STEEN CHRISTENSEN. Can be obtained for $5.00 (Canadian or U.S. funds) directly from Mekanisk Musik Museum Vesterbrogade 150, Copenhagen, Denmark (Claes O. Friberg - Director).

Piano Roll - 'Member Harvey Roehl brought to the Bash last year the manuscript of "The Vestal Press Rag", a thickly-scored work in the classic ragtime tradition that combines some unusual features with touches reminiscent of Joseph Lamb. Harvey can now supply a piano roll of this tune, played by its composer Jonathan Jensen, for $3.50 postpaid in the U.S., $4.50 elsewhere. Piano roll buffs should contact Harvey at P.O. Box 97, 3533 Stratford Drive, Vestal, New York 13850.'

Book - The Art of Ragtime by William J. Schafer and Johannes Riedel - (cloth bound, 250 pages) deals with "Form and Meaning of an Original Black American Art". Published by Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, U.S.A. 70803 ($10.00 in U.S.)

LP Record - DOWNTOWN with JERRY WHITE - Stereo - 12 tracks - includes Runnin' Wild, 12th Street Rag, Flight of the Bumblebee, Snowflakes, Margie, Mame, Hello My Baby, Rose of Washington Square. Available from Howard D. White, 500 Buttermere Avenue, Interlaken, N.J. 07712, U.S.A. (Price $5.00 postpaid U.S.A. & Canada - $6.00 elsewhere)

Books - Plenum Publishing Corporation advises that its DA CAPPO PRESS, publishers of THE ROOTS OF JAZZ series, is now in a position to supply 2 new reprints in paperback, "JAZZ" by Nat Hentoff and Albert J. McCarthy and the third edition by Winthrop Sargeant, "JAZZ, HOT and HYBRID." For more particulars write to above at 227 West 17th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011 or buy at your favourite bookstore.

LP Record - AMERICAN BEAUTY: 12 Ragtime Classics played by BRIAN DYKSTRA may be obtained by writing to Brian Dykstra, Department of Music, The College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio, U.S.A. 44691. (U.S. price postpaid is $5.00)

LP Record - THE NEW SUNSHINE JAZZ BAND has a new record OLD RAGS FDL1-0549. Tony Hagert is leader, available from J. Donald Rouse, 5010 - 11th St., Arlington, Virginia 22205, U.S.A. (Price $6.00 in U.S.)

LP Record - Finger-bustin' Ragtime - Dave Jasen - Blue Goose 3001 - 54 King Street, New York, N.Y. 10014 (U.S. price postpaid $5.95). Dave plays 16 rags including some of his own.

SOMETHING DOING...

JOHN ARPIN - at the Chelsea Inn, 33 Gerrard St. W., Toronto - in "The Piano Bar" Mon. to Fri. 5:00 p. m. to 8:00 p. m. and with his trio in "The Chelsea Bun" Lounge Mon. to Sat. 9:00 p. m. to 1:00 a. m.

EUBIE BLAKE - The DEAN of RAGTIME - This popular recording artist and composer performs frequently at Concerts and Festivals. Does guest appearances on T. V. talk shows and is often to be heard on radio programs (watch your local press music programs for dates).

STEEN CHRISTENSEN - at the Mechanical Music Museum (MMM), Vesterbrogade 150, Copenhagen (Denmark), every 2nd & 4th Wednesday each month.

BOB DURST - (RAJAH OF RAGTIME) plays ragtime piano on the Holiday Inn circuit thru the middle U. S.

DON EWELL - at the Life Lounge 3233 N. Ocean Blvd., Fort Lauderdale, Florida, with Andy Bartha and the Deep South Dixieland Jazz Band.

PETER FARHENHOLTZ - plays solo ragtime piano and with bands - regularly at Jacob's Bar BQ, Arhus and at Stenkaelderen, Arhus (Hjortshoj, Denmark)

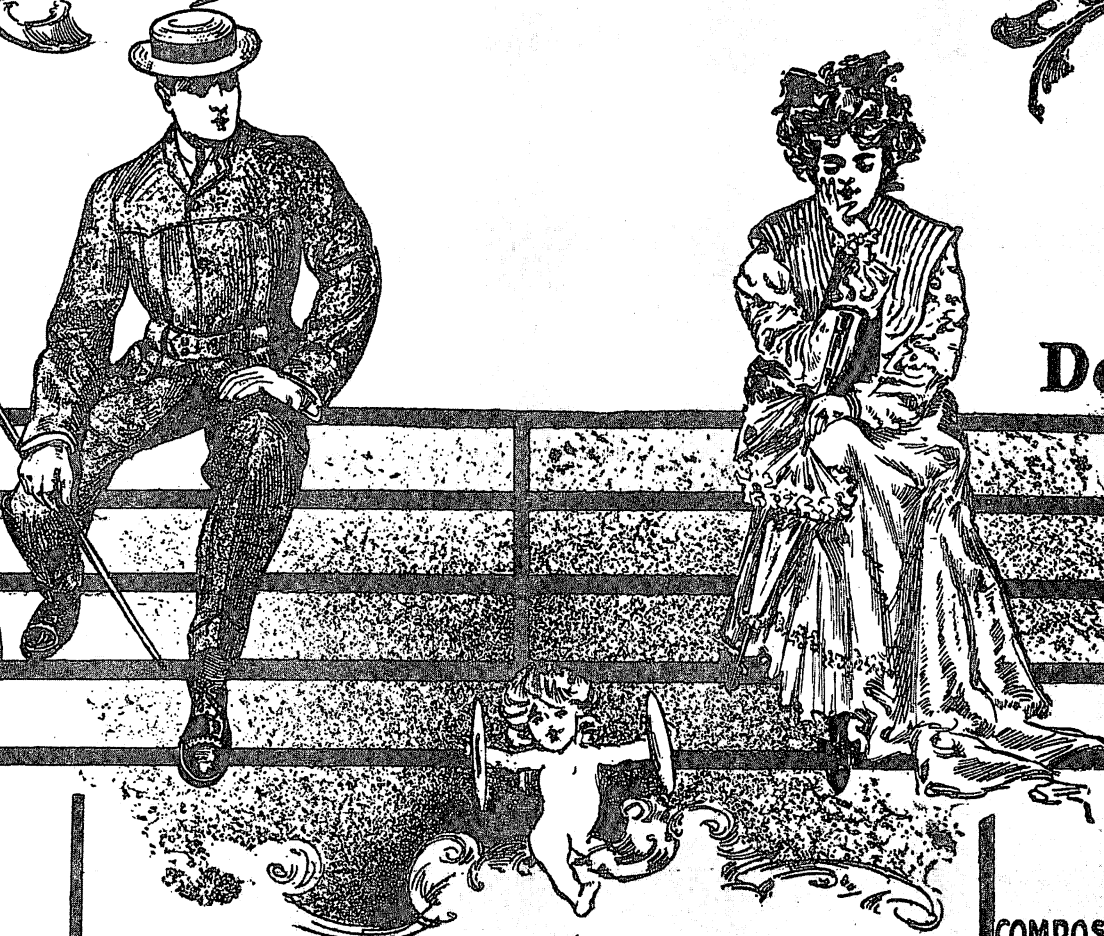
"GASLIGHT" GALE FOEHNER - at Rochester, N. Y. - Regularly performing ragtime and sing-a-longs with slides at concerts and private party engagements.

JIM HESSION - at the Polynesian Hotel (Tambu Lounge), Disney World, Orlando, Florida - six nights a week.

JIM KAPLAN - at the Pizza-Stein, 1428 W. Galena Ave., Freeport, Illinois on Tuesday, Friday and Sundays.

JOHN MADDOX	- at Cherry Creek Inn, Denver, Colorado, from November 17 to January 3, 1976.
KEN MAYHERCY	- (RAGTIME $ BILL) Plays regularly at the Ramada Inns at Casper and Steamboat Springs, Colorado.
GLENN MEYER	- and his band in the Mississippi Steamboat Company room at Mansion House Center, St. Louis, every Monday at 8:30 p. m.
BOB MILNE	- at The Sundog on Michigan Ave. in Dearborn, Michigan, plays Classical Ragtime and sometimes his own compositions.
MIKE MONTGOMERY	- at The Dakota Inn, Rathskeller, Detroit, Michigan, Friday nights.
MAX MORATH	- on the road with his new show "The Ragtime Years".
DR. ELI NEWBERGER	- and The New Black Eagle Jazz Band at the Stickey Wicket Pub, West Main Street, Hopkinton, Mass., Thursday 8:00 p. m. to 12:00 p. m. (Pianist is Bob Pilsbury.)
TOM NOEL	- on the road with his living portrayal shows "Mark Twain at Home", and "Mr. Jelly Lord" based on the life of Jelly Roll Morton.
CHARLIE RASCH	- with SISTER KATE, at the Cow Palace, Bancroft Road about 8 miles west of Toledo, Ohio, Fridays and Saturdays 9:00 p. m. on.
TOM SCHMUTZLER	- and the Hardware City Temperance and Ragtime Society, at Shakey's Pizza Parlor, Vernon, Conn. - Fridays and Saturdays. - at Ramada Inn, Int'l Airport, Windsor Locks, Conn. Sundays at 6:30 to 10. 30 p. m.
BOB SEELEY	- at Old Mill Restaurant, 5838 Dixie Highway, Waterford, Michigan (U. S. 10) Monday thru Saturday nights at 8:00 p. m.
DAN SUMMERS	- and the New Charleston Chasers (with the ODJB sound) at Speak Steak House, Whirlpool St. at Cleveland Avenue, Niagara Falls, N. Y., Saturday nights and some Friday nights.
TREBOR TICHENOR	- on The Goldenrod Showboat, at St. Louis, Missouri. Does weekly radio show on KWMU - FM 90. 7 called "RAGOPHILE with Trebor Tichenor", Fridays at 6:00 p. m.
TERRY WALDO	- at Engine House #5, German Village, Columbus, Ohio, Wednesday and Thursday 9:00 p. m. to 12:00 p. m. (when not on the road).
TEX WYNDHAM	- and The Red Lion Jazz Band, appearing regularly at The Surrey Restaurant, 1101 Philadelphia Pike, Wilmington, Delaware.
BILL ZINN	- and Zinn's Ragtime String Quartet doing Concerts and College dates in the New York area.
PERFORMERS:	Please keep us posted on your whereabouts and your schedule will appear in this column.

ELITE SYNCOPATIONS



Dolce.

BY THE KING OF RAG TIME WRITERS.

Scott Joplin

COMPOSER OF MAPLE LEAF RAG THE ENTERTAINER ETC. ETC.

JOHN STARK & SON
SHEET MUSIC PUBLISHERS
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FRED GRAF ENGRAVER ETC.